



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47)

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2 Feb 00

From: Commanding Officer, USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard
Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (UPDATED)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) USS RUSHMORE Command History Narrative for Calendar
Year 1999
(2) Commanding Officer Photograph and Biography
(3) Ship's Photograph
(4) Ship's Newsletters from 1999

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.

M. J. Howard
M. J. HOWARD

Copy to:
COMPHIBGRU THREE (Code N002P)

I. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

a. MISSION

1. To conduct sustained combat operations at sea anywhere in the world in support of national policy. The ship will be employed in operations with other forces in projecting naval power ashore from those sea areas under U.S. control.

2. To transport elements of a landing force to an amphibious objective area (AOA) and then launch assault craft in support of amphibious assault operations. USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) operates primarily as an element of an amphibious task group or force in sustained offensive operations to gain or maintain sea control through the projection of power ashore.

3. USS RUSHMORE is designed to provide functional support in three primary mission areas:

- (a) amphibious warfare (AMW)
- (b) mobility (MOB)
- (c) command and control (CAC)

4. Secondary mission areas incorporated into the design:

- (a) special warfare (SPW)
- (b) fleet support operations (FSO)
- (c) non-combat operations (NCO)
- (d) ocean surveillance (RSV)
- (e) electronic warfare (EW)

5. Limited self-defense in the following areas:

- (a) anti-air warfare (AAW)
- (b) surface warfare (SUW)

b. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

COMMANDING OFFICER - Commander Michelle J. Howard, USN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER - Lt. Commander R. D. Graves, USN
COMMAND MASTER CHIEF - ETCM(SW) Adalberto Flores, USN

DECK DEPARTMENT

FIRST LIEUTENANT
FIRST DIVISION

(b) (6)

THIRD DIVISION
SHIP'S BOATSWAIN

- Ensign (b) (6)
- Chief Warrant Officer 4 (b) (6)
(b) (6)

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

CHIEF ENGINEER
MAIN PROPULSION ASSISTANT
AUXILIARY DIVISION

- Lt. Commander (b) (6)
- Lieutenant (b) (6)
- Lieutenant (JG) (b) (6)
(b) (6)

ELECTRICAL DIVISION
REPAIR DIVISION
DAMAGE CONTROL ASSISTANT

- Ensign (b) (6)
- Ensign (b) (6)
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 (b) (6)
(b) (6)

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

OPERATIONS OFFICER
COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER
DIVISION
COMMUNICATION DIVISION
ELECTRONICS MATERIAL
OFFICER

- Lieutenant (b) (6)
- Ensign (b) (6)
- Ensign (b) (6)
- Ensign (b) (6)

NAVIGATION

NAVIGATOR

- Lieutenant (b) (6)

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

SUPPLY OFFICER
DISBURSING OFFICER

- Lieutenant (b) (6)
- Lieutenant (JG) (b) (6)

TRAINING DEPARTMENT

TRAINING OFFICER

- Lieutenant (b) (6)

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

MEDICAL OFFICER

- Lieutenant (b) (6)

DENTAL DEPARTMENT

DENTAL OFFICER

- Lieutenant (b) (6)

c. PERMANENT DUTY STATION - USS RUSHMORE's current home port is Naval Station San Diego, California.

II. CHRONOLOGY 1999

<u>Month/Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
01 FEB - 05 FEB	INSURV
22 FEB - 05 MAR	PELELIU ARG Y2K INTEROPERABILITY WORK-UP
12 MAR	CHANGE OF COMMAND
22 MAR - 06 APR	COMPTUEX/TRUE AT SEA
19 - 30 APR	KERNEL BLITZ 99/FLEETEX
08 - 19 MAY	SOCCERT
17 JUN	SEA TRIALS
21 JUN	DEPART FOR WESTPAC 99
28 JUN - 1 JUL	PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII PORT VISIT
14 - 23 JUL	SASEBO, JAPAN PORT VISIT
1 - 6 AUG	PHUKET, THAILAND PORT VISIT
16 AUG	STRAIT OF HORMUZ TRANSIT
21 - 26 AUG	JEBEL ALI, U. A. E. PORT VISIT
26 AUG - 10 SEP	EXERCISE IRON MAGIC WITH U. A. E.
10 - 16 SEP	JEBEL ALI, U. A. E. PORT VISIT
18 - 22 SEP	DOHA, QATAR PORT VISIT
28 SEP - 13 OCT	EXERCISE RED REEF WITH SAUDI ARABIA
2 - 5 OCT	JUBAIL, SAUDI ARABIA PORT VISIT
24 - 30 OCT	SINGAPORE PORT VISIT
07 - 12 NOV	GUAM PORT VISIT
19 - 23 NOV	MACKAY, AUSTRALIA PORT VISIT
25 - 28 NOV	BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA PORT VISIT
11 - 13 DEC	PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII PORT VISIT
13 - 21 DEC	TIGER CRUISE 99

19 - 20 DEC	OFFLOAD MARINES, CAMP PENDLETON
21 DEC	RETURN TO HOMEPORT, SAN DIEGO, CA
21 - 31 DEC	POST-DEPLOYMENT/HOLIDAY STANDDOWN PERIOD

III. NARRATIVE

The keel was laid for LSD-47 on 09 November 1987 at Avondale Shipyard in Louisiana. It was the fourth LSD-41 "WHIDBEY ISLAND" class Landing Ship Dock to be contracted at Avondale Industries using the new modular construction method. She was christened "RUSHMORE" by Mrs. Meredith Brokaw, wife of NBC News anchorman, Tom Brokaw, upon her launching on 06 May 1989. The ship was commissioned on 1 June 1991.

RUSHMORE continued to lead the way in 1999 for the Pacific Fleet and the future of amphibious ships by continuing its role as the test platform for the "Smart Ship" program known as Gator 17. The program is designed to determine if new technologies and manning procedures can be used to reduce crew levels and workload for the LPD-17 class amphibious ships still in the design phase.

In early 1999, RUSHMORE conducted various work-ups and inspections in preparation for deployment in June. The ship's fifth Change of Command was held 12 March, during which Commander Michelle J. Howard relieved Commander T. R. Williams as Commanding Officer. Prior to deployment, RUSHMORE underwent the last of the pre-deployment work-ups and participated in KERNEL BLITZ/FLEETEX 99. RUSHMORE deployed on 21 June.

After a port visit to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, RUSHMORE headed to Sasebo, Japan where repairs were made to the rudder. From Japan, RUSHMORE visited Phuket, Thailand before heading to the Arabian Gulf. During August and September, RUSHMORE had the opportunity to conduct international training exercises, including Operation IRON MAGIC with the United Arab Emirates and Exercise Red Reef with Saudi Arabia.

In mid-October, the PELELIU ARG departed the gulf. The RUSHMORE made a port visit to Singapore before going to Guam to offload, washdown, and then backload all 11th MEU vehicles and equipment. During the transit to Australia, the RUSHMORE crossed the equator and a "crossing the line" ceremony was held. RUSHMORE visited Mackay and Brisbane, Australia before returning to Pearl Harbor, where participants in Tiger Cruise 99 met the ship. RUSHMORE arrived in San Diego, CA on 21 December 1999.

in 1990. Her next assignment was onboard USS MOUNT HOOD (AE 29) as Chief Engineer. She was Tactical Action Officer (TAO) during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. She assumed duties as First Lieutenant onboard USS FLINT (AE 32) in July 1992. In 1993, she transferred to BUPERS (Bureau of Naval Personnel) as the Navy's liaison to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Military Services (DACOWITS). In July 1996, she became the Executive Officer (XO) of USS TORTUGA (LSD 46). She was the first woman in the Navy to be assigned duties as XO of a combatant.

CDR Howard has a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the U. S. Naval Academy. She graduated from the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College in June 1998 with a Masters in Military Arts and Sciences (MMAS) with a focus in History.

CDR Howard was presented with the Secretary of the Navy/Navy League CAPTAIN WINIFRED COLLINS award in 1987. This award is given to one woman officer a year for outstanding leadership.

RUSHMORE NEWS

By JO3 Jill Cutler



PRE-DEPLOYMENT FAIR

A Pre-deployment Fair for all RUSHMORE crewmembers and their families is scheduled for May 3 and 6, 1999, from 1800 to 2100 at the Naval Station FTC Auditorium.

The fair will start off with opening comments from CDR Howard, RUSHMORE's Commanding Officer, which will be followed by a short question and answer session. Presentations will be made by the Family Service Center, the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, the Naval Station Legal Service Office, and the Naval Station Police Department. Photographs and fingerprints will be taken for the Ident-a-Kid Program. Crewmembers and their families will also have the opportunity to meet RUSHMORE's new Ombudsman, Mrs. (b) (6), and her assistant, Mr. (b) (6).

The USS RUSHMORE Pre-deployment Handbook will also be available at the fair. The handbook will include valuable information concerning separation, communication, emergencies, points of contact, and reunion preparations.

The fair will be mandatory for RUSHMORE crewmembers. Duty sections 1, 5, and 6 are scheduled to attend Monday, 3 May. Duty sections 2, 3, and 4 are scheduled for Thursday, 6 May. Free child care will be provided.



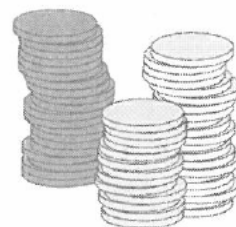
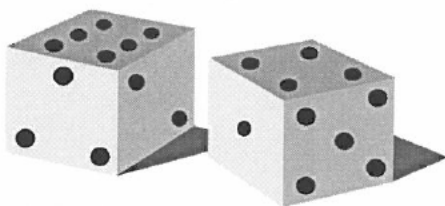
ENLISTED SURFACE WARFARE QUALIFICATION

Congratulations to RM2(SW) (b) (6) and PN1(SW) (b) (6) for receiving their ESWS pins!



MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS SELECTION

Congratulations to DT1 (b) (6) and ET1(SW) (b) (6) for their selection to the Medical Service Corps!

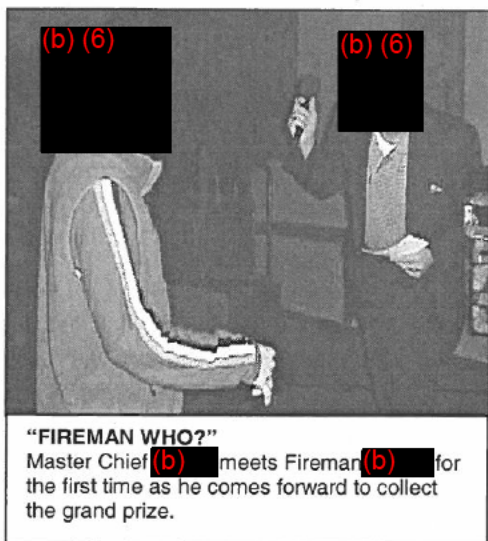


SHIP'S PARTY 1999

By JO3 Jill Cutler

USS RUSHMORE's annual ship's party was held Saturday, February 20 at the Scottish Rite Center.

The theme of the party was "The 80's" and many people came dressed in their favorite 80's style outfits. There were tables full of food, a deejay who played 80's music for those who dared to dance, and a "pretend" casino where guests could try their luck at blackjack, craps or roulette. Each crewmember was given two tickets worth one hundred dollars each of pretend money to be used at the gambling tables.



The highlight of the evening was the raffle where four thousand dollars in prizes were given away. The grand prize trip for two to Laughlin, Nevada was given to the person who won the most money at the gambling tables, Fireman (b) (6). His winnings for the evening totaled six thousand dollars. Fireman (b) (6) had just reported aboard RUSHMORE the Thursday before the party.

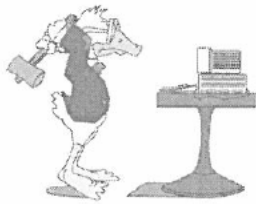
"I had a lot of fun at the party," said (b) (6). "I got to meet a lot of the people on the ship."

Many other prizes were raffled off, including a DVD player, televisions, stereos, cameras, and a Nintendo 64. Certificates for special liberty and days off from duty were also given away.

The party was organized by the RUSHMORE's MWR Officer, LTjg (b) (6).

"I was really happy with the turnout," said (b) (6). "We had some awesome prizes, and it was a blast. I hope I get to coordinate another ship's party at my next command."

The money raised at the party will be used for future MWR events.



Y2K TESTING/INTRA-ARG READINESS TRAINING EXERCISE

By LT John C. Thurmond

RUSHMORE recently participated in the Y2K Testing/Intra-ARG Readiness Training Exercise in late February and early March. This gave RUSHMORE and the other ships in the PELELIU Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)—as well as the CONSTELLATION Battle Group—a chance to test numerous mission critical combat systems for Y2K Compliance. The ARG also used this underway time to conduct some valuable ARG training prior to the embarkation of the Marines from 11th MEU.

The Y2K Testing part of the exercise was a Commander 3rd Fleet initiative to validate Y2K compliance initiatives in an underway environment. All involved systems had been previously tested in lab and in-port environments, and all had passed with few discrepancies. This exercise provided the Navy and the Department of Defense with the first large scale platform for Y2K testing. It was, in fact, the largest DOD Y2K test to date. The goal of the exercise was not to complete with all involved systems 100% compliant, but rather to validate tests already completed in lab environments and document any discrepancies which arose in an underway environment.

In order to properly validate the involved systems, their clocks were each set to Dec. 30, 1999 at 12:00 A.M. on February 27th and then allowed to roll normally to Dec 31st and Jan 1st, 2000. Clocks were adjusted by either local time or by Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which time the systems employed. As the clocks moved, the crews of most ships celebrated with mock New Year's parties, while contractors and evaluators stood by the systems to document results.

As part of the testing, each ship embarked several consultants, both civilian and military, from organizations such as Space and Naval Warfare Center (SPAWAR), Naval Surface Forces Pacific, and Amphibious Group Three. These consultants arrived with detailed testing plans for each system in hand, which were conducted with the assistance of ship's personnel. Upon completion of certain scheduled events, the consultants and some members of the involved crews met aboard USS PELELIU for "hot wash" meetings to discuss results and develop continued testing plans.

Because of the assistance from these consultants, the testing plans were largely transparent to RUSHMORE. This allowed the crew to focus on training to operate in a multi-ship ARG environment and integrate several new communications and information systems. All said, the crew found the exercise to be a rewarding experience. ETC (SW) (b) (6) commented, "I really think all divisions learned a lot about our systems. We realized that we have a good handle on the Y2K situation and that we are ready to deploy as a 21st Century ARG."

MEET THE RUSHMORE: EN1 (b) (6)

By JO3 Jill Cutler

On a cold, windy day in March, the crew of the USS RUSHMORE lined up on the flight deck for yet another awards ceremony. Over 50 people were called forward to receive various awards. EN2 (b) (6) was one of the crewmembers called forward to receive a Navy Achievement Medal (NAM). As the Executive Officer finished reading (b) (6) citation, CDR Williams stepped back from his place in front of the awardees to take the microphone. "I just realized something," he said. "I should be pinning this NAM on EN1 (b) (6) not EN2 (b) (6)." "

CDR Williams gave the microphone back to the XO and proceeded to pin 1st Class Petty Officer chevrons on (b) (6) dungaree shirt.

"I was shocked," said (b) (6). "I had been put in for CAP before and hadn't been selected. It was something I didn't expect."



EN1 (b) (6) hard at work in his new workspace, Machinery Division's Tool Issue.

CDR Williams had chosen (b) (6) for CAP, or the Command Advancement Program. Each year, Commanding Officers of surface units are allowed to meritoriously promote a certain number of their personnel to the next higher rank.

According to (b) (6) supervisor, ENC(SW) (b) (6) was very deserving of the promotion.

"He has a very high initiative level and is very intelligent," said (b) (6). "He always gets the job done correctly. He's also a very good manager."

(b) (6) was made Work Center Supervisor of Main Machinery Room Two last year. According to Juster, he got the space back up to standards before the RUSHMORE underwent Engineering Certification (ECERT) in October 1998.

He is also a vital member of the ship's Engineering Training Team (ETT). He helped to develop realistic drill simulations using machinery control console software. Due to his efforts as a member of the team, the Propulsion Examining Board said that the RUSHMORE's command and control was the best that they had ever seen.

(b) (6) new work center is Machinery Division's Tool Issue.

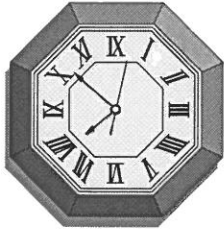
"I volunteered to come to Tool Issue," said (b) (6). "I wanted to reorganize and establish a system of issue for tools and parts for Machinery Division before they leave on WESTPAC."

(b) (6) is transferring to Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA) in June. He calls his experience on the RUSHMORE "educating."

"I really did learn a lot and I will miss it here," he said. "It's a good ship with a lot of good people."

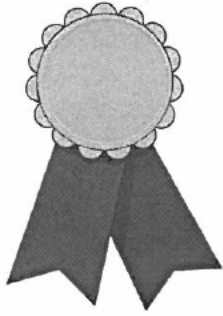
"Meet the Rushmore" is a new feature of The Gator's Tale. Each issue, you will meet another outstanding member of the RUSHMORE crew

TIME ZONE CHART



We have provided the following chart to help you coordinate phone calls with your family members during inport periods while deployed. We have listed times using military time notation. (1:00 P.M. is 1300, 2:00 P.M. is 1400, 3:00 P.M. is 1500, etc.) To use the chart, find local California time to the nearest hour in the right-most column, then read directly across to the left to the column showing the time zone where RUSHMORE is currently located.

JORDAN	SAUDI/ KUWAIT	THAILAND	SINGAPORE/ HONG KONG	AUSTRALIA	DATE LINE	HAWAII	CALIFORNIA
←	←	←	←	←	NEXT DAY	DAY BEFORE	→
1500	1600	2000	2100	2200	0100	0300	0600
1600	1700	2100	2200	2300	0200	0400	0700
1700	1800	2200	2300	2400	0300	0500	0800
1800	1900	2300	2400	0100	0400	0600	0900
1900	2000	2400	0100	0200	0500	0700	1000
2000	2100	0100	0200	0300	0600	0800	1100
2100	2200	0200	0300	0400	0700	0900	1200
2200	2300	0300	0400	0500	0800	1000	1300
2300	2400	0400	0500	0600	0900	1100	1400
2400	0100	0500	0600	0700	1000	1200	1500
0100	0200	0600	0700	0800	1100	1300	1600
0200	0300	0700	0800	0900	1200	1400	1700
0300	0400	0800	0900	1000	1300	1500	1800
0400	0500	0900	1000	1100	1400	1600	1900
0500	0600	1000	1100	1200	1500	1700	2000
0600	0700	1100	1200	1300	1600	1800	2100
0700	0800	1200	1300	1400	1700	1900	2200
0800	0900	1300	1400	1500	1800	2000	2300
0900	1000	1400	1500	1600	1900	2100	2400
1000	1100	1500	1600	1700	2000	2200	0100
1100	1200	1600	1700	1800	2100	2300	0200
1200	1300	1700	1800	1900	2200	2400	0300
1300	1400	1800	1900	2000	2300	0100	0400
1400	1500	1900	2000	2100	2400	0200	0500



ADVANCEMENTS

PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS

BM3 (b) (6), BM3 (b) (6), BM3 (b) (6), BM3 (b) (6),
BM3 (b) (6), EM3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6),
EN3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6),
ET3 (b) (6), EW3 (b) (6), JO3 (b) (6), SM3 (b) (6),
OS3 (b) (6), BM3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6), HT3 (b) (6),
OS3 (b) (6), SK3 (b) (6), EM3 (b) (6)

PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS

DC2 (b) (6), DC2 (b) (6), EN2(SW) (b) (6), EN2 (b) (6),
ET2 (b) (6), DK2 (b) (6), RM2 (b) (6), RM2 (b) (6),
OS2 (b) (6)

PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS

EM1(SW) (b) (6), MR1 (b) (6), EN1 (b) (6), SH1 (b) (6),
SM1 (b) (6)

A W A R D S

SAILOR OF THE YEAR

SK1(SW) (b) (6)

SAILORS OF THE QUARTER

4TH QUARTER FY98

SSOQ - OS1(SW) (b) (6)

SOQ - EW2 (b) (6)

JSOQ - EN3

1ST QUARTER FY99

SSOQ - (b) (6)

SOQ - HM2(SW) (b) (6)

JSOQ - (b) (6)

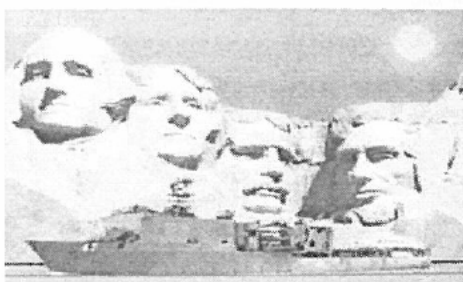
NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL

CWO3 YOUNG, CWO3 (b) (6) HTCM(SW/AW) (b) (6)

ENC(SW) (b) (6)

NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

LT (b) (6) HTCM(SW/AW) (b) (6) BMCS(SW) (b) (6)
QMC(SW/AW) (b) (6) PNC(SW) (b) (6) DT1(SW) (b) (6) SK1(SW) (b) (6)
BM2 (b) (6) IC2(SW) (b) (6) EN2 (b) (6) EN1 (b) (6)
ET2 (b) (6) EN3 EN2 EN3



GATOR'S TALE CHAIN OF COMMAND

COMMANDING OFFICER-
CDR MICHELLE J. HOWARD

EXECUTIVE OFFICER-
LCDR SUE DUNLAP

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF-
ETCM(SW) A. FLORES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER-
LT JOHN C. THURMOND

ASSISTANT PAO-
ENS J. T. ZABLOCKI

GATOR'S TALE EDITOR-
JO3 JILL K. CUTLER

WELCOME ABOARD

MAC(SW) (b) (6)

EMC(SW)

ENC(SW)

DT1 (b) (6)

EN1(SW) (b) (6)

DC1 (b) (6)

HT1

MM

DC2(SW) (b) (6)

ET2 (b) (6)

OS3

QM3

DT3

ET3

EN3 (b) (6)

OSSN (b) (6)

OSSN (b) (6)

SN (b) (6)

RMSN (b) (6)

FN (b) (6)

FN

SN

FN

SN

RMSN (b) (6)

SN (b) (6)

GMSN (b) (6)

A NOTE FROM THE CAPTAIN, CDR MICHELLE J. HOWARD:

Greetings families and friends of RUSHMORE Sailors,

The change of command was 12 March. The ceremony was terrific. RUSHMORE officers, chiefs, and enlisted put on a great show. Relatives and colleagues were impressed. Thanks for all the hard work!

I will work to keep you informed as much as possible. Along those lines, the Careline is active again. Please jot the Careline number down and keep it with you. I have updated the message twice since the change of command and already answered a few calls.

We have selected a ship's Ombudsman and an assistant Ombudsman. Our primary Ombudsman is Mrs. (b) (6), wife of MAC(SW) (b) (6). She will be assisted by Mr. (b) (6), husband of ET3 (b) (6). Both the Ombudsman and her assistant will be available to meet crewmembers and their families at the pre-deployment fair. On the more social side, if anyone is interested in forming a family support group for the ship, please contact the Command Master Chief.

I'm writing this on our last night of COMTUEX. We had a busy underway, and I just wanted to note that the Sailors and Marines performed superbly.

Our next few underways are our opportunity to train with the Marines prior to the deployment. We are required to certify our capability in several mission areas before we depart for the Persian Gulf. We also need to take the time to prepare ourselves at home prior to 21 June. The Command Master Chief has scheduled a few nights in May for pre-deployment seminars. I encourage all of you to attend. There will be important information given, plus pre-deployment guides will be available.

I would like to share with you some of the questions that I have received from the crew in the last few weeks.

Will there be a Tiger Cruise? Yes, we're planning a Tiger Cruise from Hawaii to Pendleton and also from Pendleton to San Diego. More information will be provided before we deploy.

Will there be a dependent's day cruise before deployment? The Operations Officer is investigating using the Sea Trials date (the week before we deploy) as a dependent's day cruise. The deadline for submitting names will be 18 May.

Will the duty sections expand? Not before deployment. I will give the leadership until 01 October to develop a duty section plan that expands to at least a nine section rotation. From 01 October until our return, the crew will cross train so that we will be able to roll into the new sections after the stand-down period.

Lastly, I just wanted to say, USS RUSHMORE has a wonderful crew. I consider myself very lucky to take command of such a group of professionals. Your husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, and friends are the best, and you can be proud of them.

-Michelle Howard, Commanding Officer.

THE GATOR'S TALE

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) "AMERICA'S GATOR"

June/July 1999

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RUSHMORE SAYS FAREWELL TO SAN DIEGO

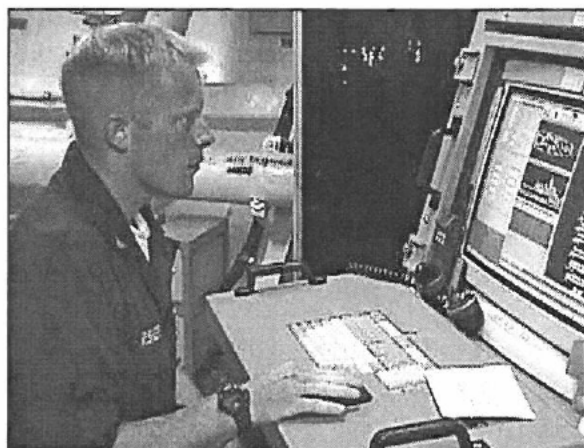
By JO3 Jill Cutler

On June 21, 1999 the brow of the West Coast Smart Ship, USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47), was raised and her crewmembers manned the rails to wave good-bye to family and friends. RUSHMORE departed on a six-month Western Pacific (WESTPAC) deployment.

For some of the crew, this deployment will be one of many. For other RUSHMORE Sailors, this will be their first real Navy adventure. For all of the crewmembers, this deployment as a test platform for the Smart Ship program known as GATOR-17 will be very different from any other.

Electronics Technician 1st Class (b) (6) is one of the many ET's onboard who work on the Smart Ship computers.

"Deploying with the smart ship systems onboard gives us an opportunity to try new and exciting things that have never been done before," said (b) (6).



DC2 Risner operates the Damage Control Quarters (DCQ) system in the Central Control Station (CCS).

The Smart Ship program is designed to determine if new technologies and manning procedures can be used to reduce crew levels and workload for the LPD-17 class amphibious ships still in the design phase.

According to Damage Controlman 2nd Class (b) (6) the Smart Ship program is going to benefit the Navy in the long run.

"It will help us in the way we delegate man hours and will help redirect our focus from watches to workload," said (b) (6). "I'm excited and curious to see how beneficial the program will be during deployment."

The Smart Ship installation that began in 1997 was completed late last year. The new systems included a fiber optic Local Area Network (LAN) that links all of the RUSHMORE's

computers, a "real-time" Damage Control System that replaced all of the internal communications alarms in Central Control Stations, and an Integrated Bridge System that links all aspects of the bridge watch together.

MEET THE NEW EXECUTIVE OFFICER

By JO3 Jill Cutler

"I'm loud, but user friendly."

That is how RUSHMORE's new Executive Officer (XO), Lieutenant Commander Roy "Digger" Graves, describes himself.

LCDR Graves officially relieved LCDR Susan Dunlap as XO on May 7, 1999.

"It's great to be here," said Graves, a native of (b) (6). "The RUSHMORE crew is very hard working. The people here are caring and want to succeed."

LCDR Graves has served aboard three other surface units, including the USS SARATOGA (CV-60) as a Main Propulsion Division Officer and later as the Aft Propulsion Group Officer. After Surface Warfare Department Head training in 1992, he reported to the USS EL PASO (LKA 117) as the Chief Engineer. Upon the decommissioning of the EL PASO, he was assigned to the USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD-44) as the Chief Engineer.

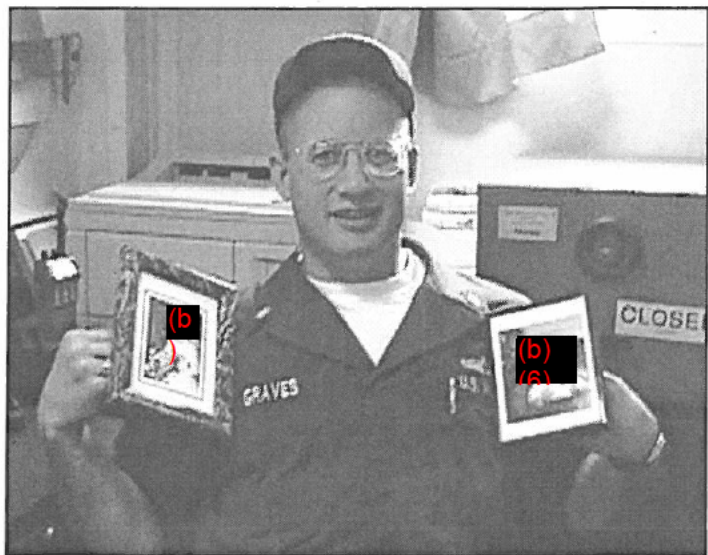
"This is my fourth ship and the one thing that's the most prevalent is that the crews get better and better," said LCDR Graves. "All Sailors have heart and desire and are looking for leaders to guide them."

LCDR Graves said he thinks the RUSHMORE's Smart Ship systems make it unique.

"Smart Ship is a great opportunity for us," said LCDR Graves. "It's a necessary step in the evolution of the Navy into the next century, but there will be growing pains. It's part of our mission during this deployment to find out what the system's limitations are. I look forward to effectively performing our mission while flexing our Smart Ship capabilities in an operational environment."

LCDR Graves, an avid weight trainer, graduated from the University of Lowell in Mass. In 1983, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering. He was commissioned through the Officer Candidate School in 1986.

After his tour on the SARATOGA, Graves transferred to Newport, Rhode Island where he was assigned to the staff of Officer Candidate School as the Second Battalion Officer. He later served as Director, Officer Instructor Training School. In February 1996 he was assigned to the staff of the Surface Warfare Officers School Command in Newport, Rhode Island where he was the Director of the Boiler Water/Feedwater Training School. He was then assigned as a student at the Naval War College also in Newport where he graduated in November 1998,



LCDR Graves poses in his new office with photos of his wife, (b) (6), and his children, (b) (6).

earning a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies. While stationed in Newport, he also graduated from the University of Rhode Island in December 1998, earning a master of Marine Affairs degree.

RUSHMORE RECEIVES NEW PERSONNEL SYSTEM

By JO3 Jill Cutler

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) received a demonstration version of a new computerized personnel system prior to deploying. The Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS)/Electronic Field Service Record (EFSR) will be a single point of entry system for all personnel and pay data. The RUSHMORE was chosen as the first command to test the system because she is about to deploy and will use the system under "at sea" operational conditions.

The crewmembers who will be operating the system on the RUSHMORE recently received training on the system. The service records of all RUSHMORE crewmembers were scanned into the NSIPS/EFSR shipboard local database prior to training.

One of the Yeomen who received training was Yeoman 3rd Class (b) (6)

"The system is very user friendly," said (b) (6) who is the ship's legal clerk. "I won't have to run down to Personnel to check out service records any more. I can just pull them up on the computer in Admin and print out the information I need."

Service records can now be accessed by authorized users on the unclassified Local Area Network (LAN). The Commanding Officer (CO), Executive Officer (XO), Command Career Counselor (CCC), Department Heads, and Disbursing Clerks have "view only" access to the field service records. The Personnelmen and Yeomen, who currently maintain service records, are authorized to make changes.

RUSHMORE'S Commanding Officer, Commander Michelle J. Howard, said she is excited about having the system on board.

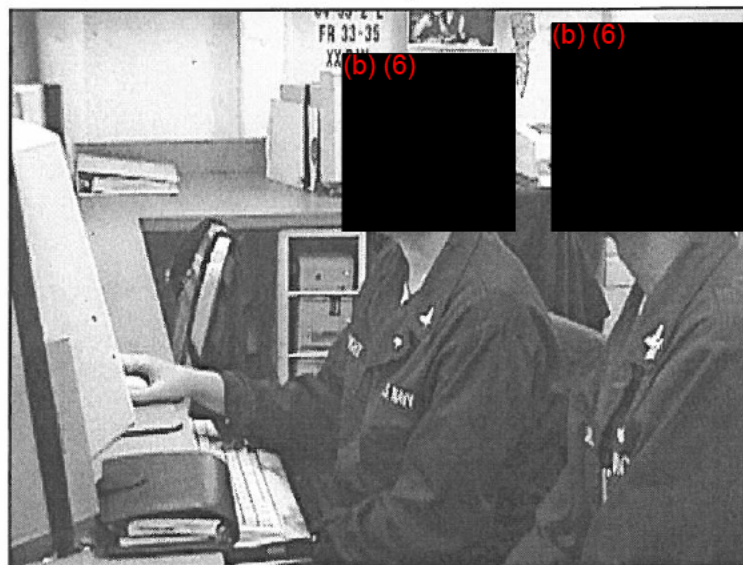
"It's a wonderful opportunity for us," she said. "The system gets rid of all the old-fashioned pieces of paper."

Commander Howard also likes the fact that information on personnel will be easier to acquire.

"If you need something, it's right there at your desk," she said. "I think when the whole fleet is online, it will be great. We will be able to look at someone's service record before they even check into the command."

According to Yeoman 1st Class (b) (6) crewmembers will soon be able to view their own service records on computers located in the ship's library.

"This will save us time because we will no longer have to



YN3 (b) (6) and YN1(SW) (b) (6) use the NSIPS/EFSR system in the ship's office.

sign out records to the rewmembers," said (b) (6) "It also cuts down on the chance of service records being lost or misplaced."

"This system will greatly reduce the amount of paperwork that we have to do," said (b) (6) "Administrative tasks, such as preparing packages for selection boards, will take much less time. Instead of mailing the packages out, board members at the Bureau of Naval Personnel will be able to access the packages on their own NSIPS/EFSR system."

This is the first time the EFSR will be used operationally and is therefore an important test of the concept of using electronic records in place of paper records.

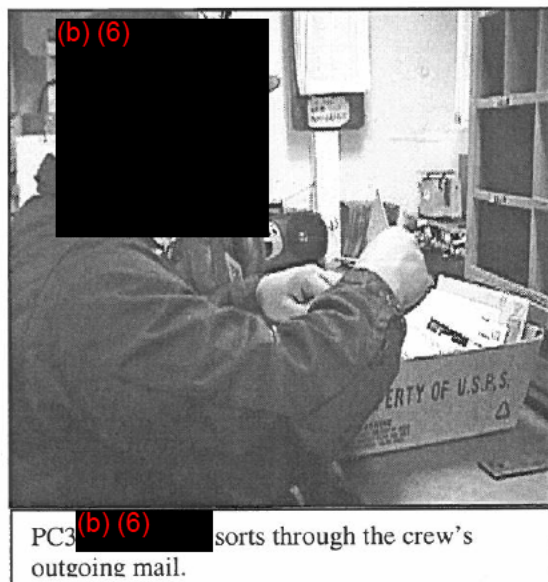
"It's great that we were chosen as the test platform," said (b) (6) "We get to try out the new system before the rest of the fleet. The training we're getting is very valuable. We will have to get used to the system at first, but when we do, it will make our jobs much easier."

MEET THE RUSHMORE: PC3 (b) (6)

By JO3 Jill Cutler

Twice a year, thousands of Sailors around the world await the results of the Navy-wide advancement exams. The results from the March 1999 exam were recently released and many deserving RUSHMORE Sailors were promoted to the next higher rank. One of those Sailors is (b) (6) who was selected for promotion to Postal Clerk 3rd Class.

"I was very surprised... and relieved," said (b) (6) "I really didn't expect to make it this time. The test was very hard."



PC3 (b) (6) sorts through the crew's outgoing mail.

(b) (6) who has been onboard the RUSHMORE for two years, said he chose to be a Postal Clerk shortly after checking in.

"I knew I wanted to be a PC, but when I first got here the rate was closed," he said. "A few months before the exam, the Disbursing Officer told me that it had opened up again so I turned in all my courses and took the exam."

In preparation for the exam, (b) (6) studied after working hours with the ship's postal clerk, PC1 (b) (6).

"I think it's great that (b) (6) made third," said (b) (6), who was just promoted to first class. "He really earned it. It makes things easier for me to have an assistant. It enables the post office to run more efficiently so that we can provide better service to the crew."

(b) (6), a native of (b) (6), said he is excited about RUSHMORE'S 1999 deployment.

"It will be hard to be away from my family and my girlfriend, but I joined the Navy to travel," he said. "I'm anxious to see other places." (b) (6) will be leaving the Navy for college at the end of his enlistment.

"I want to pursue a music career," he said. "I play both the piano and the guitar." (b) (6) said he plans to attend the University of Northern Texas because they offer a good music program.

A W A R D S

SAILOR OF THE YEAR

SK1(SW) (b) (6)

SAILORS OF THE QUARTER

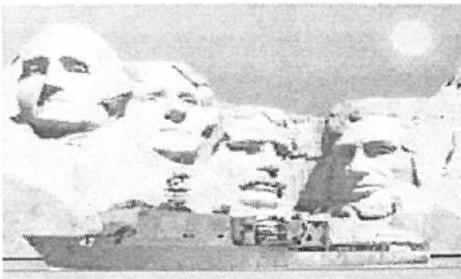
SSOQ - HT1(SW) (b) (6) SSOQ - SH1(SW) (b) (6)
SOQ - OS3 (b) (6) SOQ - BM2 (b) (6)
JSOQ - IC3 (b) (6) JSOQ - FC3 (b) (6)

ADVANCEMENTS

BM3 (b) (6) SK3 (b) (6) IC3 (b) (6) FC3 (b) (6) MS3 (b) (6) AE3 (b) (6)
EN3 (b) (6) EN3 (b) (6) MM3 (b) (6) PC3 (b) (6) MS3 (b) (6)
GM3 (b) (6) EW2 (b) (6) IC2 (b) (6) OS2 (b) (6) OS2 (b) (6) RM2 (b) (6)
BM2 (b) (6) SM2 (b) (6) BM2 (b) (6) ET2 (b) (6) EN2 (b) (6) PC1 (b) (6)

NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

LT (b) (6) DC1(SW) (b) (6) ET1(SW) (b) (6)
EN2 (b) (6) EW2 (b) (6) RM2 (b) (6)



GATOR'S TALE CHAIN OF COMMAND

COMMANDING OFFICER-
CDR MICHELLE J. HOWARD

EXECUTIVE OFFICER-
LCDR ROY D. GRAVES

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF-
ETCM(SW) A. FLORES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER-
ENS J. T. ZABLOCKI

GATOR'S TALE EDITOR-
JO3 JILL K. CUTLER

WELCOME ABOARD

MRS. (b) (6) - COMMAND
OMBUDSMAN

LTJG (b) (6)

ENS (b) (6)

ENS

ENS

ENS

CWO2 (b) (6)

SK1 (b) (6)

HT1

MS1

DT1

PN2 (b) (6)

RM2

OS2

YN2

HM3

EN3

ET3 (b) (6)

DT3

MS3

HT3

RMSN

SN (b) (6)

SN

OSSN (b) (6)

OSSN

SN (b) (6)

ETSN (b) (6)

RMSN

ETSN

ETSN

SHSN

SN (b) (6)

A NOTE FROM THE COMMAND OMBUDSMAN, MRS. (b) (6)

Hello, my name is (b) (6) and I am your newly appointed Ombudsman. I would truly like to convey my sincere thanks to Commander Howard for allowing me to participate in the Ombudsman Program. Over the course of my husband's career, I have been fortunate to deal with good Ombudsmen and commands alike. It is my hope that I bring some of that experience and commitment to each of you, our dependent families, in order to allow our men and women who are being deployed the opportunity to perform their jobs without worry.

Over the next few months we will come together as one large "Navy" family. As with any family, we will have our share of trials and tribulations. I am here to tell each of you that "This Too Shall Pass." We will walk away from this deployment, as with every experience and challenge we face in life, being better and stronger people. We will learn to uphold our fellow spouses and families when they feel sad, draw from each other's strengths and share in each other's triumphs.

I encourage each of you to reach out to your fellow "Navy Rushmore Family Member" and get to know them, help them and guide them. Please consider getting involved with the phone tree or the family support group. This will not only bring you closer to your loved one on the ship, but allow you and your family the opportunity to mingle and bond with the other families from our Rushmore community.

You can expect me and/or (b) (6) to communicate to you through our Careline (619)685-7624 which will have updates on the ship's activities and other vital information. You will also have the opportunity to leave messages, which we intend to answer daily. Should a life-threatening emergency arise, you can reach me anytime, day or night, by dialing my pager number (b) (6).

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to (b) (6) for volunteering and committing to our "Navy Rushmore Families".

I look forward to meeting each of you in the upcoming months. For now, take care and smile.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Ombudsman USS Rushmore (LSD-47)

A NOTE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER, CDR MICHELLE HOWARD:

Hello family and friends of RUSHMORE. Some of you were able to join us on the family cruise before we left. I have received a few cards and letters, thanking the crew for their courtesy and friendliness. We appreciate the fact that several of you were able to join us and watch us at work. Thanks for coming.

We are currently moving at 15 Knots headed for the Straits of Malacca. We are scheduled to anchor off of Phuket, Thailand on 01 August.

Many of you already know that we spent last week in Sasebo, Japan. The repairs went well, and we are on our way to re-join the OGDEN and PELELIU. Since we have been separated from the Big Deck, we have not been able to download e-mail. Your friendly thoughts and prayers are queued up for us in Hawaii. Once we're back with the PELELIU, e-mail will start again. We will not always be in company with the PELELIU. So, if occasionally you don't have an immediate reply from your RUSHMORE Sailor, don't worry. Your message will eventually get through.

Due to the change in schedule, some of our mail has missed us. We hope to be united with the post when we arrive in Thailand.

The big news of the week is that the schedule change for our return trip is out. We are now scheduled to be in Bali the second week of November and Australia over the Thanksgiving weekend. More details will be posted as we receive them. The crew, of course, is very excited about the schedule.

Before Australia, of course, is our primary mission, the Gulf. We expect to be in the Gulf for a few months. We have continued training on our way over. We have some exercises planned with other countries and should be quite busy.

Other big news is that we had two people selected for Chief. DC1(SW) (b) (6) and EN1(SW) (b) (6) were both picked up this cycle. We are all proud of their accomplishment. We'll take pictures of the promotion ceremony to send home to their families in September.

RUSHMORE's crew has been very busy the past few weeks. When they are not working, many spend their time studying for advancement exams in September or preparing for Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist Qualification Boards. As I walk around the ship, most Sailors talk to me about you, their family and friends. They miss you. And they think of you often.

That's about all. Please keep in touch.

Commanding Officer sends.

THE GATOR'S TALE

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) 'AMERICA'S GATOR'

October/November 1999

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RUSHMORE PARTICIPATES IN OPERATION IRON MAGIC

By JO3 Jill Cutler

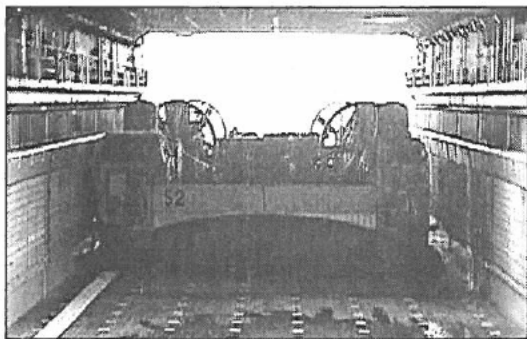
It's 0100 on a hot night in the steamy Arabian Gulf.

"Re-man all One Alpha stations. Re-man all One Alpha stations," booms the 1MC.

Onboard USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47), it's time for the crew to go to work launching Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) and Landing Craft Units (LCU).

The Sailors and Marines aboard the RUSHMORE are participating in Operation Iron Magic, a joint training exercise with an Arabian peninsula nation.

Everyone has an important job during this exercise. The engineers in RUSHMORE's ballast control station fill internal tanks, carefully increasing the ship's draft by nearly four feet in order to safely launch LCACs. Other engineers are responsible for stern gate operation and LCAC refueling. The operations specialists in the Combat Information Center (CIC) communicate with and guide the LCACs. Deck Department personnel are hard at work in the well deck controlling craft and Marine vehicle movement, despite temperatures reaching 105 degrees.



LCAC 52 prepares to leave the well deck with another load of Marine equipment.

Even Supply Department gets a piece of the action in this complex operation. Second to none in providing food and parts support to well deck and craft crews throughout the long nights, they also prepare for the unexpected. Tonight an LCU craft master's short-notice request for seven days' worth of food is satisfied within 45 minutes.

Engineman Second Class (Surface Warfare) (b) (6) is in charge of the LCAC Refueling Team.

"We've been working some very long hours during this operation," said (b) (6). "My team has to be on stand-by at all times during LCAC ops. As

soon as one comes in, we've got to be down there, ready to re-fuel. It doesn't matter how long we've been up or what time of the night it is."

In CIC, Operations Specialist Seaman (b) (6) communicates with the pilots aboard the LCACs.

"It's our job to control the ship to shore movement of the LCACs," said (b) (6). "We've been very busy the last few days of this operation. I think it's great that we're all getting to practice our jobs. That way, when we need to do all of this under pressure, we'll already know what to do."

Hull Technician Second Class (b) (6) is one of the engineers responsible for ballasting the ship.

"We sink the ship in order to launch the LCACs from the well deck," explains (b) (6). "We have to re-ballast every time we off-load. The less cargo we have onboard, the lighter we get. We have to take on more water in order to sink to the right depth."

"This operation is good practice for us," said (b) (6). "We need to get used to performing our mission in this environment."

RUSHMORE's Operations Officer, Lieutenant (b) (6) said he feels the crew has performed very well and is lucky to be involved in the operation.

"We should be thankful that there are countries that allow us to go ashore on their land for training purposes," he said. "In order to be prepared for real exercises in the gulf environment, we need to train in this environment. This is a great opportunity for us to really practice our mission, which is putting our Marines and their equipment on the ground wherever they are needed."

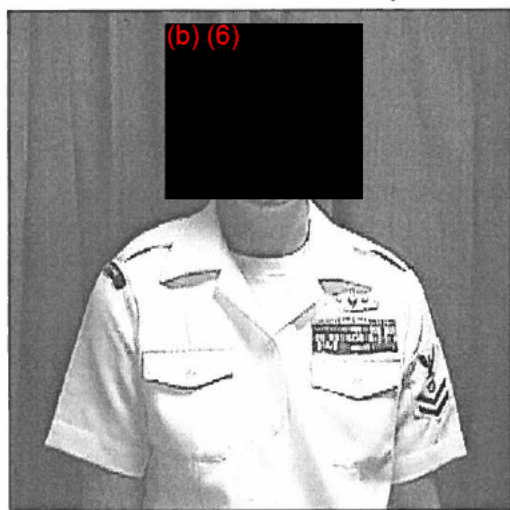
After working all day and all night, the RUSHMORE crew finishes operations just before sunrise. It's time to hit their racks for some well-deserved rest. In a few hours it will all begin again.

RUSHMORE SAILOR NAMED PELELIU ARG SOQ

MEET THE RUSHMORE: EN2(SW) (b) (6)

By JO3 Jill Cutler

RUSHMORE's Engineering Auxiliary Division Leading Petty Officer (LPO) was recently selected as the PELELIU Amphibious Readiness Group's Sailor of the Quarter.



EN2(SW) (b) (6)

Engineman Second Class (Surface Warfare) (b) (6) was first selected as RUSHMORE's SOQ, then her package was sent to the PELELIU for the ARG board.

"I was shocked when I found out I had been selected as RUSHMORE's Sailor of the Quarter," said (b) (6). "I didn't even know I was in the running for the ARG SOQ."

(b) (6) who has been onboard the RUSHMORE since February 1998, said she owes her nomination to the other Sailors in her shop.

"I work with a great group of people who like to work," said (b) (6). "They make my job easier and they've helped make me who I am today."

Engineman Third Class (b) (6) is one of the people who work with (b) (6) in A Division.

"Petty Officer (b) (6) is an outstanding leader," said (b) (6). "She makes sure we get everything done and keeps us happy."

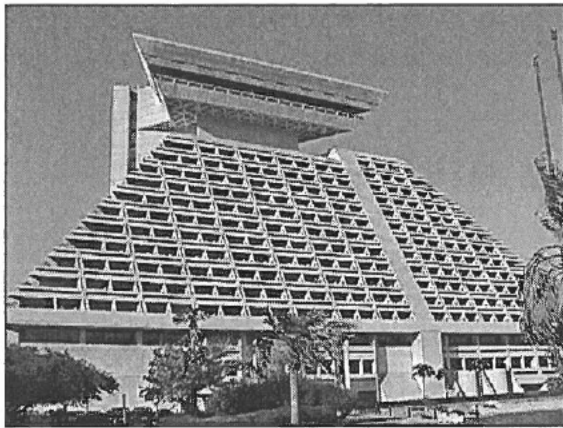
(b) (6) said he thinks (b) (6) really deserves the recognition.

"She's one of the hardest working Sailors I've encountered since I've been in the Navy," said (b) (6). "She was the best candidate we had for Sailor of the Quarter."

RUSHMORE VISITS DOHA, QATAR

By JO3 Jill Cutler

The RUSHMORE arrived in Doha, Qatar September 18, 1999, becoming the largest U. S. Navy ship to visit the country in over 10 years.



THE DOHA SHERATON was where most Sailors and Marines went to kick back and relax.

Only smaller ships, such as frigates and destroyers, have visited Doha in the last decade.

The Sailors and Marines of RUSHMORE were given special treatment during their four-day stay. Hotels offered crew members use of their pools, spas, beaches, and volleyball courts for \$10 a day.

Electronics Technician Second Class (b) (6) (b) (6) enjoyed relaxing at the Doha Sheraton.

"It was so nice being able to relax by the pool," said (b) (6). "The hospitality at the hotel was very impressive. They took care of everything we needed. It was a lifesaver."

(b) (6) said she enjoyed being a guest of the city of Doha.

"Doha is a very clean city," said (b) (6). "The architecture was beautiful."

Interior Communications Electrician Second Class (b) (6) also took advantage of the Sheraton's hospitality.

"I had a nice, relaxing time playing volleyball and swimming in the pool," said (b) (6).

This is (b) (6) second deployment on the RUSHMORE, but his first visit to Qatar.

"I really did have a good time in Doha," he said. "It was probably the best time I've ever had in the Gulf."

Qatar, one of the richest countries in the world, has many American restaurants. Taco Bell, McDonald's, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Arby's, Hardees, Ponderosa and Dairy Queen were all just a short taxi ride from the pier.

"I was nice to be able to go out and get American food," said (b) (6). "It was like having a little piece of home over here in the gulf."

Yeoman First Class (b) (6) enjoyed the food at the Ponderosa restaurant.

"It was some of the best food I've had since leaving San Diego," said (b) (6).

(b) (6) and some of his friends also went to the local mall to do some shopping.

"We had fun at the mall," he said. "We were able to catch a glimpse of the local culture. Most people there were very friendly to us."



A water fountain shaped like an oyster with a pearl inside.

Sailors were also able to enjoy such activities as golf, at Doha's PGA-quality golf course, and bowling at the small bowling alley inside the Sheraton hotel.

MCPON VISITS RUSHMORE

By JO3 Jill Cutler

The Navy's highest enlisted member visited the RUSHMORE August 23, 1999 in Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates (U. A. E.).



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) James Herdt met first with RUSHMORE's Chiefs Mess where he posed for pictures with then-Chief Selectees ENC(SW) (b) (6) and DCC(SW) (b) (6).

From the Chiefs' Mess, MCPON went to SITE TV where he addressed the entire crew over live television. He first thanked the crew for their hard work and dedication. He then addressed many important issues that he is commonly asked about.

According to the MCPON, he is asked about pay raises and retirement pay everywhere he visits.

"I think we will see the proposed 4.8% pay raise take effect in January," he said. "It will be the highest raise for military members this decade."

"In July, the pay table reform may give some Sailors a raise of up to 5%," said Herdt. "The purpose of the reform is to try to close the pay gap between the military and civilian sectors."

According to Herdt, the proposed plan for retirement pay will be a choice between 50% retirement pay and a "Redux" plan which would give Sailors a \$30,000 retirement bonus and 40% retirement pay.

"I'm afraid that Sailors will jump at the Redux plan because of the \$30,000 bonus and not think about the difference in pay percentages," said Herdt.

The MCPON discussed giving Basic Housing Allowance (BAH) to single E-4's.

"We are looking at this as a possibility," said Herdt, "but I don't think we'll see anything in writing for another year or two."

Herdt also addressed mandatory warfare qualifications and why he supports the new program.

"As a Navy, we have a right to expect career service members to be warfare qualified," he said. "The warfare qualification program was designed to improve esprit de corps and an increase in professionalism within each warfare community. This goal wasn't achieved because qualification wasn't mandatory."

In closing, MCPON again thanked the RUSHMORE crew.

"You are out here doing impossible jobs in impossible heat and it makes my chest swell with pride," he said.

Before leaving the ship, MCPON took time to pose for photos with RUSHMORE's Sailor of the Year and Sailors of the Quarter.

A W A R D S

PELELIU ARG SAILOR OF THE QUARTER

EN2(SW) (b) (6)

RUSHMORE SAILOR OF THE YEAR

SK1(SW) (b) (6)

SAILORS OF THE QUARTER

SSOQ - SH1(SW) (b) (6)

SSOQ - EM1(SW) (b) (6)

SOQ - BM2 (b) (6)

SOQ - EN2(SW)

JSOQ - FC3

JSOQ - ENFN (b) (6)

ADVANCED TO CHIEF PETTY OFFICER

DCC(SW) (b) (6) and ENC(SW) (b) (6)

NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

MAC(SW) (b) (6)

EMC(SW) (b) (6)

QM1(SW) (b) (6)

BM2 (b) (6)

BM2 (b) (6) BM2 (b) (6)

GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL

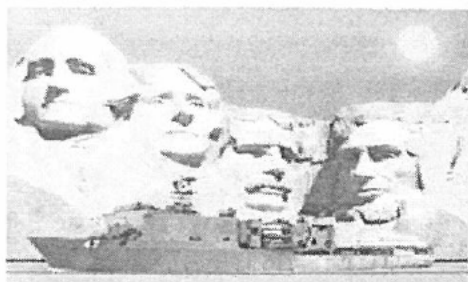
SKC(SW) (b) (6)

BM1 (b) (6)

BM2 (b) (6)

MS2 (b) (6)

BM3 (b) (6) DC3 (b) (6)



GATOR'S TALE CHAIN OF COMMAND

COMMANDING OFFICER-
CDR MICHELLE J. HOWARD

EXECUTIVE OFFICER-
LCDR ROY D. GRAVES

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF-
ETCM(SW) A. FLORES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER-
ENS J. T. ZABLOCKI

GATOR'S TALE EDITOR-
JO3 JILL K. CUTLER

WELCOME ABOARD

ENS (b) (6)

DCCS(SW) (b) (6)

ETC(SW)

QM1(SW)

SH1(SW)

RM1 (b) (6)

EN1

RM3(SW)

DC3 (b) (6)

QMSN

SN (b) (6)

SN

SN (b) (6)

FN (b) (6)

COMMANDING OFFICER'S COLUMN

Greetings everyone! By the time you receive this newsletter, you will probably have eaten too much candy for Halloween and are just starting to plan the Thanksgiving dinner. As you count your blessings this Thanksgiving, please include thanks for the fact RUSHMORE Sailors and Marines are heading back towards San Diego and have been kept safe.

Today is 15 October, and we transited the Straits of Hormuz yesterday. We will take on some fuel and then head East. Our schedule is still being discussed, but most likely we will go to Singapore next. After Singapore we'll head towards Okinawa. On our way home we'll stop off in Australia.

We had a great visit from Rear Admiral Smith, Commander Amphibious Group Three, just a few days ago. Your friends and family onboard RUSHMORE have told me they appreciate the fact that the Admiral came out here to check on us. RADM Smith first words were that we would be home for Christmas. He then discussed manning in the Navy, quality of life topics, and operational issues. Admiral Smith spent the night onboard in order to take the time to watch us operate with LCACs off the beach. He toured the well deck and bridge while we recovered Marines from EXERCISE RED REEF.

By now you are aware that the three ships of the ARG are no longer together. This "split", of course, impacts our email capability. Without the helicopters from PELELIU, I also expect that regular mail will be delivered or picked up only when we go in port. We'll continue to write, but you'll probably get several letters at once for a while until the ships are reunited. I would like to remind you, should you ever have an emergency, please contact the American Red Cross. They can get a message to us.

The Sailors have had a busy time in the Gulf. We did two major exercises, offloaded the Marines and most of their gear, and trained with Sailors from Middle Eastern nations. We went alongside replenishment ships about once a week. We even took fuel from a British Oiler at one point. In what little off time they had, many people were studying for the September exams. With the exams done, I see quite a few folks now working on their Enlisted Surface Warfare Qualifications (ESWS).

We had a few days liberty in the countries of U.A.E, and Qatar. Dubai, U.A.E. would remind most of you of many American cities. Dubai has a few upscale malls and many familiar restaurants. I expect some of you will be sporting Dubai Hard Rock Café T-shirts come Christmas. Doha, Qatar is a small city. She has just about every fast food place ever conceived. There are only two major hotels in Doha, so RUSHMORE Sailors had a very quiet liberty port.

We'll be in the Pacific Theater of Operations shortly. We don't have any exercises planned, but we're ready in case we're called to assist somewhere. We're more than halfway through and are looking forward to coming home!

THE GATOR'S TALE

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) "AMERICA'S GATOR"

December 1999/January 2000

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RUSHMORE HEADS HOME FROM WESTPAC

By JO3 Jill Cutler

Twenty days. Nineteen days. Eighteen days.

And so the countdown continues for the Marines and Sailors aboard USS RUSHMORE as they anticipate their return to San Diego from WESTPAC.

"I'm glad we're finished," said YN1(SW) (b) (6). "It was a long cruise with a lot of hard work involved."

(b) (6) said that it's hard to be away from his family for so long.

"The first thing I'm going to do is hug my wife," he said.

For PC1 (b) (6) this is the last of many deployments.

"I'm relieved that this deployment is almost over," said (b) (6). "I can't wait to spend some quality time with my family and to have a real home-cooked meal."

(b) (6) said his wife has promised to make his favorite meal the night that he arrives. The next morning, the whole (b) (6) family plans to go out for pancakes.

"Spending time with my family is the most important thing to me," he said.

This deployment was a first for ET2 (b) (6) and her two-year old daughter, (b) (6).

"I can't wait to get home so I can spend time with my daughter," she said. "There are so many things that I've missed. After six months away from her, I won't take the little day-to-day things for granted."

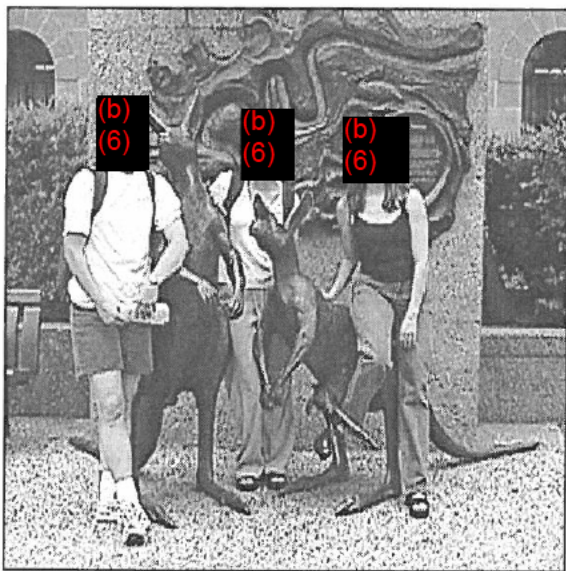
During WESTPAC 1999, RUSHMORE participated in Exercises Iron Magic with the United Arab Emirates (U. A. E.) and Red Reef with Saudi Arabia. Sailors and Marines enjoyed liberty time in Hawaii, Japan, Thailand, U. A. E., Qatar, Singapore, Guam and Australia.

RUSHMORE is scheduled to arrive at Naval Station San Diego December 21, 1999.

RUSHMORE VISITS AUSTRALIA

By JO3 Jill Cutler

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) recently visited two Australian ports on the way home from her six-month deployment.



EN2(SW) (b) (6) DC3 (b) (6) and EN3 (b) (6) pal around with some new friends in Brisbane, Australia.

In Mackay, Australia, a high school band played "Anchors Aweigh" and "The Marines' Hymn" as the RUSHMORE moored to the pier. A large crowd was gathered on the pier to welcome the crew.

PC1 (b) (6) said that Mackay was his favorite liberty port on this deployment.

"The people were very friendly and personable," he said. "I had a great time there."

Crewmembers enjoyed shopping in Mackay's small downtown area and taking tours of the surrounding rainforests and beaches.

From Mackay, the RUSHMORE traveled to Brisbane, one of the larger cities on Australia's east coast. The biggest attraction in Brisbane was a huge shopping center in the middle of downtown. Many crewmembers

also visited wildlife sanctuaries or took horseback riding tours of the surrounding countryside.

SM1(SW/AW) (b) (6) said that her world travels are now complete with this visit to Australia.

"I loved it," said (b) (6). "I got to hold a koala bear at one of the sanctuaries. It was awesome."

While in Brisbane, the ship's Morale and Welfare committee hosted a party for the entire crew. The buffet style dinner featured an amazing array of salads, vegetables, fruits, cheeses, meats and desserts. A disc jockey played any music requested by the crew. Sailors and Marines were able to work off the feast by showing their moves on the dance floor.

According to EN2(SW) (b) (6), the party and the food were excellent. "I couldn't believe how much food they had," said (b) (6). "I ate enough for two people!"

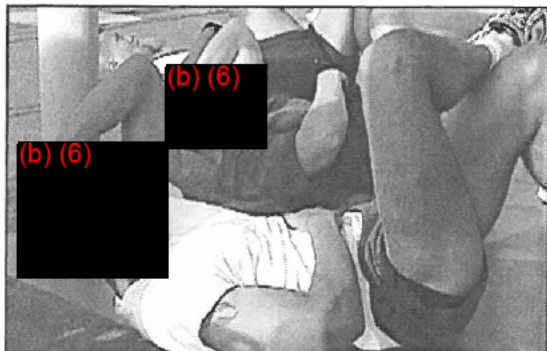
(b) (6) said she enjoyed being able to hang out with the crew in a non-working environment.

"It was good to see everyone from the ship in a different atmosphere," she said. "Everyone was relaxed and able to have a good time."

MEET THE RUSHMORE: SAR SWIMMERS

By JO3 Jill Cutler

They are the few... the proud. They are the RUSHMORE's Search and Rescue (SAR) swimmers, YN1(SW) (b) (6) and EN2(SW) (b) (6).



YN1(SW) (b) (6) and EN2(SW) (b) (6) work out on the 06 level with the SAR candidates.

"I originally became a rescue swimmer just to see if I could get through the program," said (b) (6). "I knew it was a very rigorous and physically demanding course."

The one-month course, given at the Fleet Training Center, San Diego, involves long days of physical training and classroom instruction on search and rescue procedures.

"On an average day at SAR school, you get up at 0630, run 3 miles, swim 500 yards, attend rescue lessons until lunch, then go back to the pool until securing for the day at 1700,"

said (b) (6).

"During 'PC', or Pool Conditioning, you do sprints back and forth across the pool," he said. "You have to be a competent swimmer to get yourself and someone else to safety."

"I feel that I have more of a responsibility to the people on the ship now," said (b) (6). "I have to stay in shape in case I'm ever called upon to rescue anyone. Even though there's a very slim chance that anyone would ever fall overboard, it's very tough to get people out of the water."

(b) (6) who has been a SAR swimmer for three years, said that the rescue swimmers would also be used if a helicopter crashed or went down in the water.

(b) (6) and (b) (6) will both be transferring within the next year. There are currently four Sailors trying out for their positions as rescue swimmers: ET3(SW)

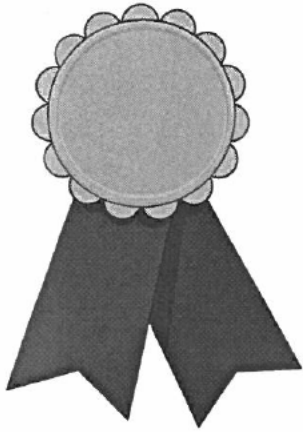
(b) (6) FC3 (b) (6) PC3 (b) (6)

(b) (6) and FC3 (b) (6). Two of the candidates will be selected to attend SAR school next

April. In order to qualify for the school, candidates must be able to do five pull-ups, run 1.5 miles in 12 minutes or less, and do a 400 meter swim in 11 minutes or less.

RUSHMORE's candidates work out with the current SAR swimmers three times a week in order to get physically prepared for the rigorous training. (b) (6) and (b) (6) both hope to become instructors at the Search and Rescue school.





CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING PERSONNEL ON THEIR ADVANCEMENTS:

THIRD CLASS PETTY OFFICERS

EN3 (b) (6), OS3 (b) (6), EM3 (b) (6),
EM3 (b) (6), PN3 (b) (6), GM3 (b) (6),
EM3 (b) (6), YN3 (b) (6), OS3 (b) (6),
OS3 (b) (6), OS3 (b) (6), YN3 (b) (6),
EN3 A. (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6),
MS3 (b) (6), JO3 (b) (6),
EM3 (b) (6), PC3 (b) (6), DC3 (b) (6),
MS3 (b) (6), BM3 (b) (6), HT3 (b) (6),
OS3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6), SK3 (b) (6),
SK3 (b) (6), DC3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6),
IT3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6), EN3 (b) (6)

SECOND CLASS PETTY OFFICERS

HM2 (b) (6), DC2 (b) (6), JO2 (b) (6), EM2
(b) (6), OS2 (b) (6), ET2 (b) (6), OS2
(b) (6), BM2 (b) (6), OS2 (b) (6), EW2 (b) (6), QM2
(b) (6)

A W A R D S

AMPHIBIOUS GROUP THREE/ PELELIU ARG SAILOR OF THE QUARTER

EN2(SW) (b) (6)

RUSHMORE SAILOR OF THE YEAR

SK1(SW) (b) (6)

SAILORS OF THE QUARTER

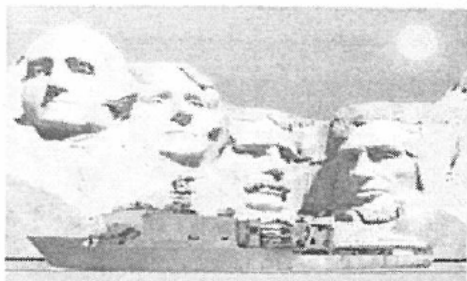
SSOQ - EM1(SW) (b) (6)

SOQ - EN2(SW)

JSOQ - (b) (6)

ENLISTED SURFACE WARFARE QUALIFICATION

BM1(SW) (b) (6) MS1(SW) (b) (6) SK1(SW) (b) (6)
BM2(SW) (b) (6) BM2(SW) (b) (6) SK2(SW) (b) (6) OS2(SW) (b) (6)
EW2(SW) (b) (6) SM2(SW) (b) (6) OS2(SW) (b) (6)
IT2(SW) (b) (6) MS2(SW) (b) (6) EW2(SW) (b) (6) BM3(SW) (b) (6)
ET3(SW) (b) (6) OS3(SW) (b) (6)



GATOR'S TALE CHAIN OF COMMAND

COMMANDING OFFICER-
CDR MICHELLE J. HOWARD

EXECUTIVE OFFICER-
LCDR ROY D. GRAVES

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF-
ETCM(SW) A. FLORES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER-
ENS J. T. ZABLOCKI

GATOR'S TALE EDITOR-
JO3 JILL K. CUTLER

WELCOME ABOARD

SM1(SW/AW) (b) (6)

EN1(SW) (b) (6)

EM1(SW)

EN2(SW)

OS2 Doyle

BM3(SW)

FC3 (b) (6)

ETSN (b) (6)

HTFN (b) (6)

DCFN (b) (6)

MSSN

FN (b) (6)

SR (b) (6)

SR (b) (6)

SR (b) (6)

SR

COMMANDING OFFICER'S COLUMN

Hello everyone. We are on our way home from Australia. As most of you know, it's just about everyone's dream to pull into Australia. Our first stop was Mackay. Mackay is a small town, but full of enthusiastic people. Although it was graduation day for the high school seniors (remember summer starts in November down under), the high school band was on the pier to greet us as we pulled in. They played "Anchors Aweigh," and "The Marines' Hymn" The folk of Mackay went out of their way to make us feel welcome. Many families hosted crewmembers for meals or just some time away from the ship.

The next stop was Brisbane, Australia. Brisbane has a population of one million, and is quite used to Navy ships stopping by on their way back home. Many Sailors and Marines told me they caught up on Christmas shopping. Several went to the Koala Sanctuary, where they had a chance to hold a Koala or pet Kangaroos. No doubt many of you will receive a photo shortly with your RUSHMORE member "cuddling" a Koala.

Our next stop is Pearl Harbor, where we will pick up the Tigers and replenish before we head home. I know the Family Support Group has been busy working on the homecoming. I'd like to say thanks now to all the members for putting together the Children's Christmas Party, and for all the preparations for our return.

After we get back, RUSHMORE will have a well-deserved Holiday/post-deployment stand down period. After January 19th, we come back and continue getting ready for our maintenance availability. We'll be transferring to NASSCO, pier 2, on 31 January. The maintenance period starts in earnest on 2 February 2000. Early April we start training again, both inport and underway.

The last five months have been challenging. You can be proud of what your RUSHMORE Sailor has accomplished on this deployment. From emergency maintenance in Japan, to two intensely operational months in the Persian Gulf, the blue-green team has performed superbly.

Just before we started home from the Gulf, my mother-in-law sent me a joke that captures our work. I kept it on the bridge for a while, and I'd like to share it with you now. It goes like this:

"After being at sea in the Persian Gulf for 90 straight days, I went to the squadron command master chief to complain. 'Chief, I joined the Navy to see the world,' I said, 'but for the past three months all I've seen is water.' 'Lieutenant,' he replied, 'three-quarters of the earth is covered with water, and the Navy has been showing you that. If you wanted to see the other quarter, you should have joined the Army.'"

That's about it. Happy Holidays to all of you!

M. J. Howard

THE GATOR'S TALE

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) "AMERICA'S GATOR"

April 1999

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RUSHMORE CHANGE OF COMMAND

By JO3 Jill Cutler

CDR Michelle J. Howard assumed command of USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47) March 12 in the ship's fifth change of command.

RADM Stephen G. Smith, Commander, Amphibious Group Three, was the guest speaker at the ceremony. Smith congratulated Williams on his successful tour aboard RUSHMORE, during which the ship underwent the final stages of its Gator-17 installation.



CDR Howard addresses the crew of the RUSHMORE as CDR Williams, right, looks on.

CDR Williams is transferring to Commander, Naval War Development Command in Newport, Rhode Island. During Williams' 11 month tour, RUSHMORE conducted various work-ups and inspections in preparation for deployment, including Tailored Ship's Training Assessment (TSTA II), Engineering Certification (ECERT), and the Logistics Management Assessment (LMA). RUSHMORE also participated in Exercise Summer Storm 1998, which included an "assault" on Camp Pendleton by embarked Marine Corps Reservists.

During his farewell speech, Williams thanked the crew for their hard work and dedication. He also thanked the members of the Wardroom and the Chief Petty Officers Mess for their support, which he said made his successful tour possible.

CDR Howard has served aboard numerous surface ships, including USS HUNLEY (AS 31), where she served as First Division Officer, Planning and Estimating Officer, and Auxiliaries Officer. She was the Main Engines Officer onboard USS LEXINGTON (AVT 16). In 1987, she assumed duties as

an instructor at the Steam EOOW course in Coronado, Calif. She became the coordinator of the course in 1989. CDR Howard was a Distinguished Graduate from Department Head School

USS RUSHMORE AND GATOR-17

USS RUSHMORE (LSD-47) is leading the way as the test platform for the "Smart Ship" program known as Gator-17, which will help lead amphibious ships in the 21st century.

The program is headed by VADM Alexander Krekich, Commander of Naval Surface Forces-Pacific. The program is designed to determine if new technologies and manning procedures can be used to reduce crew levels and workload for the LPD-17 class amphibious ships still in the design phase.

RUSHMORE is currently undergoing the Phase I installation, which will cost just under \$4 million. The installation includes: a fiber optic local area network (LAN) that will link computers from all divisions and departments; a wire-free internal communications system, called Hydra II, that will eliminate the need for sound-powered phone talkers in many evolutions; a "real-time" Damage Control System that will replace all of the IC alarms in DC Central and will be a great improvement over the use of sound-powered phones and grease pencils; new coatings for both the well deck overhead and inside the ballast tanks that will significantly increase the service life; and the reduction of equipment throughout the ship that is no longer needed due to the new configuration.

In the future, an Integrated Bridge System, that will electronically link all aspects of the bridge watch together, as well as an Engineering Monitoring/Control System, that will allow remote operation and monitoring of engineering equipment, may be installed as well. All told, the Gator-17 installations could significantly reduce underway watch stations.

Besides the technological additions to the ship as part of the Gator-17 program, a number of changes will occur within various watchstations. For example, instead of having personnel rotate through a watchbill, the ship will have CORE teams of watchstanders. Their duty underway is to stand a given watch. The remaining personnel will perform the daily work, such as PMS and corrective maintenance. When the ship encounters an unusual situation, like an underway replenishment, the ship will add additional watchstanders to create a traditional watch team for that evolution.

Through these various changes, the Gator-17 program will benefit RUSHMORE simply because of workload reduction. The program will help take away many repetitive taskings, but the ship must be cautious in cutting manpower too soon just because of the new technologies. The new systems must be proven to work before there are any manpower reductions. Phase I installation will be completed by the end of 1997 and a "Lessons Learned" report will be published.

BIOGRAPHY
MICHELLE JANINE HOWARD
COMMANDER

Michelle Howard graduated from (b) (6) in (b) (6) in 1978. She attended the United States Naval Academy, graduating in 1982 with a B.S. in Mathematics.

After Surface Warfare Officer's Basic School, she was assigned to USS HUNLEY (AS 31), homeported in Holyloch, Scotland. From November 1982 to June 1985, she served as First Division Officer (Deck Department), Planning and Estimating Officer (Repair Department) and Auxiliaries Officer (Engineering Department). During this tour, she qualified as a Surface Warfare Officer.

Upon completion of Steam Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) course, she was assigned duties as Main Engines Office onboard USS LEXINGTON (AVT 16). She obtained her EOOW qualification in 7 months. She was presented the Secretary of the Navy/Navy League CAPTAIN WINIFRED COLLINS award in May 1987. This award is given to one woman officer a year for outstanding leadership.

In 1987, she assumed duties as an instructor at the STEAM EOOW course in Coronado, California. She became the coordinator of the STEAM EOOW course in 1989, and completed Master Training Specialist Qualifications.

Commander Howard was a Distinguished Graduate from Department Head School in September 1990. She then transferred to the USS MOUNT HOOD (AE 29) as Chief Engineer. She was a Tactical Action Officer (TAO) during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. She assumed duties as First Lieutenant onboard the USS FLINT (AE 32) in July 1992.

In December 1993, she rotated to the Bureau of Personnel (BUPERS), as the Navy's liaison to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Military Services (DACOWITS). Commander Howard was also the action officer for the assignment of women in the Navy policy.

In January 1996, she became the Executive Officer (XO) of USS TORTUGA (LSD 46). She was the first woman in the Navy to be assigned duties as XO of a combatant. During her tour onboard TORTUGA the ship deployed to the Adriatic in support of OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR, peacekeeping efforts in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. Sixty days after returning from the Mediterranean deployment TORTUGA departed on a West African Training Cruise (WATC), where the ship's Sailors, with embarked Marines and US Coast Guard detachment, operated with the naval services of seven African nations.

Commander Howard graduated from the Army's Command and General Staff College in June 1998. She completed a Masters in Military Arts and Sciences (MMAS) with a History focus.

She assumed command of USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47) on 12 March 1999. USS RUSHMORE is the Navy's only Amphibious "Smart Ship". The "Smart Ship" concept integrates and evaluates commercial off the shelf technologies for future fleet application. In December 1999, USS RUSHMORE became the first Smart Ship to complete a six-month deployment.

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Commanding Officer

USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47)

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